

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace paragraph 29 with the following:

[0029] According to an embodiment of the invention, the cutting assembly 10 is operable to cut a backed ply material 46. In this regard, the backed ply material 46 includes a ply 48 and a backing 50. In various embodiments of the invention, the ply material 46 may include any suitable sheet stock. Examples of suitable sheet stocks include: woven fiber fabric; oriented strand tape; metal foil such as aluminum alloy and titanium foil; composite materials such as titanium graphite metal-fiber laminates; and the like. In a particular embodiment, the ply material 48 is a graphite fiber tape pre-impregnated with an epoxy or toughened epoxy resin (pre-preg). In another particular embodiment, the ply material 48 is a toughened epoxy resin coated titanium foil. In general, the backing 50 lends support to the ply material 48 and aids in handling the ply material 48. In this regard, during layup operations, the backing 50 is typically removed. Examples of suitable backing materials generally include conventional backing materials as well as resilient, compliant, or materials otherwise polymeric in nature. For the purpose of this disclosure, the terms, "polymeric" and "polymer" and variations thereof are defined as a chemical compound or mixture of compounds formed by a chemical reaction in which two or more molecules combine to form a larger molecule that includes repeating structural units. In addition, other examples of suitable backing material and backed ply material may be found in co-pending U.S. Patent Application Serial Number not yet assigned 10/829,270, entitled, "Backing Film and Method for Ply Materials", having inventor Richard B. Evans, and having a filing date of April 22, 2004, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.